



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jorge A. Rodriguez

U.S. Army Soldiers from HHC, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, distribute supplies and provide medical assistance to local residents during a humanitarian relief mission in Baghdad, Iraq, July 28.

## KBR pays tribute to lost, departed employees

By Sgt. W. Watson Martin  
Scimitar Staff

**INTERNATIONAL ZONE, BAGHDAD, Iraq** — A wall hanging was dedicated to 43 men and women of Kellogs, Brown and Root who have died in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom Aug. 3 in a ceremony here. One of those 43 remains missing.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) James Finn gave the invocation and consecrated the wall to those who paid the ultimate price

for service to their country and the Iraqi people.

Steven Arnold, director and project manager of the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program III, has been at his new position for less than a month. He obviously did not meet nor know the individuals on the wall, but he said, "In many respects I did know them. I knew the KBR employees who came to shore in Somalia and supported me there. It made all the difference in the world. Feeding our Soldiers and getting them out of the dirt and giving them a shower, building the morale and making all the difference in the world. I remember the KBR employees who departed our

Soldiers from the deserts of Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm."

"From the look of this wall it's small; it's not as grand as the Vietnam Memorial, but it's every bit as important and every bit a memorial," said Arnold. It is a moving experience to go to the wall in D.C. and remember lost friends, so it is what Arnold visualizes with this wall – a peaceful Iraq where friends of these KBR employees can come and visit this wall and share that time with them.

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# British commander optimistic about IA, IP training efforts in southeastern Iraq

By Gerry J. Gilmore  
American Forces Press Service

**WASHINGTON** — The British Royal Marine in charge of coalition operations in southeastern Iraq is optimistic about ongoing efforts there to train Iraqi Army and police forces to eventually assume security duties.

"We have been able to force ahead with the main effort, which is security sector reform," Maj. Gen. Jim Dutton, commander of Multi-National Division Southeast, told Pentagon reporters Aug. 5 via a video link from Basra.

Dutton's 13,000-plus-troop multinational command is made up of 7,900 British troops, 3,000 Italians, 640 Australians, 622 Romanians, 562 Japanese, 388 Danes, 97 Czechs, 33 Lithuanians, five Norwegians, and two Portuguese.

Those troops, along with Iraqi Army and police forces, are charged with providing security for four southeastern Iraqi provinces, which make up an area half the size of Great Britain. Dutton's area of operations contains the cities of Nasiriyah, Basrah and Umm

Qasr, Iraq's only deep-water port.

Dutton said his command would continue to build on its partnership with the Iraqi Army, police and border-enforcement elements "until they are capable of conducting operations successfully without our direct assistance." The "relatively benign environment" across southeastern Iraq has contributed to advancements in regional security and stability, Dutton said, although there are occasional inter-tribal disputes and citizen frustrations over a jittery electricity and water infrastructure to resolve.

Yet, life in southeastern Iraq can still be dangerous. Dutton noted that roadside explosives have killed five British soldiers in Maysan province in the past three months. Improvised explosive devices are "a major concern" within his area of operations, Dutton said.

Dutton noted there is an ongoing Iraqi police investigation into the apparent murder of American journalist Steven Vincent, who was found shot to death near Basrah last week.

The general said he remains "confident that southeastern Iraq will continue to develop."

"There is a real enthusiasm here for the democratic process, and there was a very high turnout" for the January 2005 election, he said.

Dutton said there is "no shortage of volunteers" who want to join the new Iraqi Army, noting there are now about 5,500 Iraqi Soldiers in his sector. That number is expected to increase to 9,000 soldiers next year, he said.

The new Iraqi police are receiving good training at academies in Jordan or Baghdad, Dutton said. There are about 25,000 police in southeastern Iraq, he said, more than 14,000 of whom have received training.

Any future departure of Coalition troops from southeastern Iraq would be "conditions-based, and not time-based" and would be a joint decision made between the Coalition and the Iraqi government, Dutton said.

Iraq has "a long way to go," Dutton acknowledged. But, he emphasized, "there is no doubt that this country has the resources and the people have the natural talent and desire for improvement that should prove to be a winning combination."

## KBR

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"These people have given the ultimate sacrifice; they really weren't combatants; they weren't armed; they were just doing their job trying to provide services to our Soldiers and Coalition Forces with a dedication that really matters to all those they serve. We look at these dedicated Americans on this wall and really want to thank them for their service and remember, honor and respect them," said Arnold.

As the Commander of the Defense Contract Management Agency - Iraq, Col. Jake Hansen handles one of its larger missions here, the LOGCAP contracts, which are run by KBR. Hansen did not know the people on the wall personally but feels like he knows them from their actions of what they have done for the warriors here in Iraq.

"These are the people who have provided us with all of the supplies that feed us at night. They are the ones who brought in all the containers that we live in, control our temperature keeping it cool and giving us a work environment that makes it conducive for us to do our missions. They are the people who move our fuel.

"When we turn on a light switch, it is KBR running all the power generation equipment that makes that light bulb come on. So did I know the people personally? No, but do I feel very close to each one of these 43 people on this wall? Yes, I do," said Hansen.

"This memorial may end up moving to Camp Victory in time, another KBR headquarters, where a lot of KBR employees equally have remorse for their comrades," said Hansen. "And they too can take time out of their lives, out of their day to pay homage to these people who have fallen in the line of duty."

Marc Whitt II, operations manager for Task Order 100, United States Mission - Iraq has been in country over two years as a civilian and got to Baghdad in May. When asked if he knew any of them personally, he nodded, saying, "Most of them were truck drivers at the beginning of the conflict ... that was the most dangerous job with KBR. I equate this wall with the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. The emotions I felt there are very similar to the emotions I feel today. Young men and women came over here to help the military and assist the Iraqis in having a freer life, and they paid the ultimate price of giving their life."



Photo by Sgt. W. Watson Martin

"Forty-three people who are dedicated on this wall, we remember them as friends in the community, loved ones, people in the gymnasium, people at worship services. We ask you to never let us forget the sacrifice they gave," prayed Chaplain (Lt. Col.) James Finn, U.S. Embassy - Iraq, command chaplain, at the ceremony.

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## PERSPECTIVES

# What a difference a year makes

**By Col. John Ottenbacher**  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — From a bloody battlefield and one of the most dangerous places in Iraq to a safe, prosperous and growing community of over one-half million, the Najaf Teaching Hospital reflects the changes of the city of Najaf.

One year ago, on Aug. 27, the battle for Najaf ended.

A year ago the Najaf Teaching Hospital was closed. It had been looted and its medical equipment destroyed by the Sadr Militia who had used its eight floors as a military fortress. Its basement flooded, windows and walls riddled with bullet and mortar damage, to many in Najaf, the hospital looked hopeless.

Now the hospital is open, seeing hundreds of patients per day and housing 80 in-patients. It is a training hospital for 200 medical students, 50 pharmacy students and 100 resident doctors who are looking forward to improved and expanded services.

This is a true success story brought about by a close partnership of Iraqi doctors and a U.S. team of doctors, engineers, project managers, contractors, Soldiers and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civilians. When finished, the hospital will house a new magnetic resonance imaging scanner, have computed tomography scan services, and have increased specialty surgical services including its first open heart surgical team.

The hospital will employ 1,250 people, in an area where good jobs are hard to come by.

There are many success stories in Najaf. A local television station teaming with local business and with Coalition equipment support reported all the news includ-

ing stories of U.S.-aided construction projects and humanitarian support. A local art show, the first in many years, might have a display showcased in Kansas City. A new clinic for a sheikh, a man imprisoned and tortured under Saddam, is a reality. This clinic was donated and refurbished by the Soldiers and contractors at Base Hotel, the base adjacent to Najaf.

Multiple humanitarian missions give food and medical care to the poorest of Najaf. There are daily working relationships with the Najaf government, police and Iraqi Army. Many U.S. funded projects for new schools, water projects, police and fire stations, have all contributed to an excellent working relationship and many friendships between U.S. Soldiers, civilians and Iraqi people. All this and more have contributed to the success of Najaf.

Over 100 boxes of medical books, microscopes, and endoscopes have been sent from medical schools and hospitals all over the United States to Najaf. Churches have donated boxes of food, soap, clothes and toys. The Mississippi Family Support Group has raised thousands of dollars to sponsor children needing heart surgeries and medical care in Baghdad.

As the camp surgeon, I was blessed by a working relationship with Dr. Safaa, the director of the Najaf Teaching Hospital, Dr. Ferris, the Najaf Minister of Health, and Governor Gelal, a patient of mine, and the Governor of Najaf Province.

I also enjoyed knowing Col. Majab, the local Army commander; and his father, both patients of mine. I could get things done in hours that would otherwise take weeks. Also my state Senator John Thune provided great support to me and the hospital.

I honestly believe that Najaf is the key. If successful, all of Iraq has a chance.

## Scimitar Pulse

*What is the one thing you didn't bring with you to Iraq you wish you would have?*

"Photos of my family. I thought it'd be easier not having something to look at, but it's not."

**Army Staff Sgt.**  
**Ivonne I. Rountree**  
*69th Signal Company*

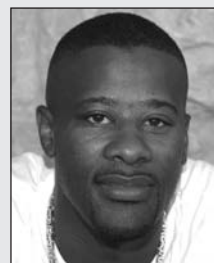


"Nothing. I brought everything I need, and the stuff I didn't bring, I didn't because this isn't the right place for it."

**Italian Army Col. Dario Buffa**  
*NATO Training Mission*

"My rice cooker. I miss eating rice cooked the way I like it."

**Air Force Staff Sgt.**  
**Khamson Manisisaket**  
*Strategy Plans and Assessments*



"My favorite watch. I feel naked without it."

**Sylvester Thomas**  
*KBR*

"My digital camera. I had to go buy another one since I forgot to bring it."

**Army Sgt. 1st Class**  
**Kelly J. Bickford**  
*Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq*



"My video camera, so I can capture the moment."

**Marine Cpl. Jermaine S. Allen**  
*Marine Security Force*

"More casual clothing. I didn't bring enough to lounge in after work."

**Brenda L. Latella**  
*Operations Support and Services*



## Hide and we'll seek



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Reynaldo Ramon  
U.S. Army Soldiers from the 164th Armor Regiment use a canine unit to search for evidence of terrorist activity during a raid on objectives Snake and Tiger in Baghdad, Iraq, last month.



## Petraeus touts 'enormous progress' fielding Iraqi Forces

**By Jim Garamon**  
American Forces Press Service

**WASHINGTON** — The chief of the Coalition command charged with training Iraqi Security Forces said “enormous progress” has been made in the effort.

Army Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, who commands Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq, told National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" that more than 105 police and Army combat battalions are "in the fight."

This breaks down to more than 93,800 members of the Iraqi police and 77,700 Iraqi service members. The total number of forces “trained and equipped” is 171,500. This time last year, only one battalion was trained and equipped well enough to assist Coalition Forces, Pentagon officials said.

Petraeus said that while most of the Iraqi units rely heavily on Coalition Forces for support and guidance, "there are still some three dozen of them that are assessed to be in the lead." By this he means that the Iraqi units are leading the fight against the insurgents with minimal or no help from Coalition Forces.

Training for the Iraqi units goes on constantly both within Iraq and outside. Insurgent forces know the security forces are the best hope for Iraq, military officials have said repeatedly, and therefore they have targeted members of the police and Army. A recent bombing killed 26 police recruits. Still, Iraqis are volunteering to serve their country, Pentagon officials said.

Coalition Forces still provide support and leadership for many of the units. "It's not surprising that there would be need for the Coalition," Petraeus said. He pointed out that it takes years to train officers and noncommissioned officers in the U.S. Army, and the effort in Iraq has been in place just slightly over a year.

The general said that given all the turmoil, he is impressed with how rapidly the Iraqis have stood their forces back up.

Given continued progress and acceptable conditions, Petraeus said, the United States may be able to reduce troop presence in the country next year, noting this depends on political progress as well as progress in the security capabilities of Iraqi Forces.

Petraeus said his command will continue to train Iraqi units. He said some of the Iraqi units have excellent leaders and are doing a great job. Others, he acknowledged, are not. But given the “age” of many of these units, he said, “it’s not surprising that units are trying to find themselves and gaining experience along the way.”

The national forces need to mirror the proportions of the Iraqi population, the general said, adding that he is pleased with the efforts of the Iraqi government to integrate the units.

Petraeus said he's not surprised by the insurgency in Iraq. "Military leaders plan for toughest circumstances," he said. "Still, sometimes I have to work hard to grasp the magnitude and scope of what it is that we are doing to reestablish a country's entire military structure. We have to work hard to keep all this in our viewscreen because it is a colossal effort."

Petraeus will leave Iraq next month to be commander of the Army's Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. Army Maj. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, who last week turned over the reins of the 1st Armored Division to Maj. Gen. Doug Robinson Jr., has been nominated for a third star, and if approved for promotion by the Senate, will replace Petraeus in Iraq.

# Seized terrorist letter claims poor leadership in Mosul

## Task Force Freedom Public Affairs

**MOSUL, Iraq** — Security Forces detained six suspected terrorists and seized a number of items including a letter written to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi while conducting a raid on a safe house in Mosul July 27.

In the letter to al-Zarqawi, the author, Abu Zayd, a terrorist operating out of Mosul, complained of the poor leadership in Mosul and mistreatment of foreign fighters.

Abu Zayd informs in his letter to the “Sheikh” that, “This is a clarification of what has become of the situation in Mosul, and it is no secret to you the noticeable decrease in the attacks carried out by the Mujahidin, from not long ago when Mosul was in the hands of the Mujahidin...” Abu Zayd continues by listing the multiple reasons why the “Mujahidin” have been less effective recently.

Abu Zayd claims that the Mosul Emirs are incompetent; attacks lack diversity; suicide bombings are focused more on quantity and not quality; those who are in the network are disobedient; a legitimate organization in Mosul does not exist; collaboration between the Emirs is lacking; “Muslim money” is squandered on petty expenses; numerous security violations occur; “inaccurate and blurred” updates to the Sheikh are reported; and foreign fighters endure “deplorable” conditions to include lack of pay, housing problems and marginalization.

Similar complaints to the “Sheikh” regarding lack of leadership were found in a letter written by a known terrorist cell leader who fought in Fallujah. Multi-National Forces found this letter, authored by Abu Asim al-

Qusaymi al-Yemeni and dated Apr. 27, during a raid in Baghdad in May.

Abu Zayd proposed a few solutions to the many problems he outlined to include a warning that if focus and pursuit of development is not provided to Mosul, "...the fall of Mosul in the hands of the Mujahidin is possible, and because it relieves the pressure off the other cities such as Al-Qa'im, Tal'afar."

In recent months Multi-National Forces have captured or killed many of the key leaders of terrorism in Mosul, to include Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's most trusted military commander, Muhammed Khalaf Shakara, aka Abu Talha. Security Forces captured Abu Talha, the former Mosul Emir of al Qaeda in Iraq, in Mosul June 14.

Abu Talha and his organization are responsible for attacks against Iraqi citizens, Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Forces. Abu Talha used improvised explosive devices and suicide bombings to suppress local citizens and was known to have assassinated local clerics, governmental officials, businessmen and citizens who protested his intimidation tactics.

Within a month after the significant capture of Abu Talha, Security Forces detained two other key terrorist leaders in Mosul, Abu Bara and Mullah Mehdi. Abu Bara served as a facilitator of suicide bombings and was affiliated with many of the cells within the Talha network. Abu Bara was a former subcommander of Al Qaida Emir of Mosul, Abu Talha, but replaced Talha after he was captured June 14. Mullah Mehdi was a senior leader within the Talha network and the military leader of all insurgents operating in eastern Mosul.

## *Rhode Islanders build relationships in Baghdad*

**By Capt. Andrew Lane**  
Task Force 1/118 Public Affairs

**TAJI, Iraq** — Rhode Island National Guard Soldiers patrol the towns and streets just outside of Baghdad looking for enemy terrorists or signs of their activity.

These 1st Platoon, Company D, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment, Soldiers who are attached to 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery Regiment, 48th Brigade, Georgia National Guard, must be prepared to defend themselves and handle any situation that may arise.

Although they are ready for combat, they are also ready to reach out to the people in the community they patrol.

Recently, 1st Lt. Dave Disi, 1st

Platoon leader, had an opportunity to do just that with his Soldiers.

"We were at a night traffic control point to catch curfew violators in cars," he explained. "When we arrived, the locals were watching television outside a coffee shop, and then they started to gather around and talk to us."

It was not too much longer until “their kids came out and we gave them Beanie Babies and candy,” he said.

"I got about half the Beanie Babies and candy from my sister-in-law, who is an elementary school teacher in Long Island, N.Y., and my aunt, who is a retired Wisconsin school teacher," said Disi. "We got the other half of the toys and candy from a storage warehouse at Camp Taji."

“This crowd was nice and

approachable,” Disi said. “In fact, here the local people even aided us with the traffic control point by helping to tell the drivers to stop for us.”

After about an hour on the ground with the town's residents, the Soldiers' relief arrived in the area, and the Rhode Islanders went back to Camp Taji.

"We are happy to give back to the community. We returned to the town just a few days ago and saw the same people as friendly as ever," Disi said. "Hopefully, we can continue this good relationship together."

D Co. has detained a few terrorists in their area and now is enjoying a relatively calm setting compared to other areas of Iraq. However, they search every day to find more terrorists and stand ready to defend their area along with its residents.

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# Iraqi engineers construct Baghdad's future

By Norris Jones  
Army News Service

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — So what is it like living in Baghdad today?

Just ask two Iraqi brothers who are engineers and work for Gulf Region Central District — they are optimistic about their future and their country's future.



U.S. Army photo

**Asaad Hassan Al-Jaair and his brother, Hayder, oversee a construction project in Baghdad for the Gulf Region Central District.**

Asaad Hassan Al-Jaair and his brother, Hayder, are GRC quality assurance representatives. One of the projects Asaad oversees is the \$10 million, 6,400 square-meter Public Order Brigade Headquarters at Forward Operating Base Justice, which is 70 percent complete. He's also managing the nearly finished \$2.5 million, 11,500 square-meter renovation of the Civil Defense headquarters building in Baghdad. Hayder's project is the new \$8.5 million, 4,000 square-meter courthouse being built in Baghdad that is 15 percent complete. They were hired to ensure construction at each site meets design specifications, that all materials are of acceptable quality, and that workers practice safety procedures by using hard hats, gloves and goggles. At those three projects, about 500 Iraqis work as part of construction crews.

Asaad, 28, earned his master's degree in structural engineering and civil engineering in 2002 from Al-Nahrain University-Baghdad. Hayder received his master's in civil engineering studying foundations and underground structures in 2004 from University of Baghdad.

"We have lived in a closed world most of our lives," Hayder said. "We don't discuss what we do in our home community. We try not to attract attention. We use public transportation because it's the safest way to travel. It takes us an hour or two every morning to get to work. We vary our route to and from the job site."

"The terrorists are trying to stop Iraqi people from having a better life. We hope that the terrorists are defeated, that security is resolved and that everyone can live in peace working together to rebuild our country," he said. "Because of problems the terrorists are creating, all people in Baghdad are facing the same issues — not having electricity for our air conditioners and refrigerators, no running water for hours at a time, standing in long lines for diesel fuel for our generators or gasoline for our cars, not enough food in the markets, and long waits at security gates."

Hayder explained when terrorists destroy a primary health-

care center, water treatment plant, a sewer plant, or electric transmission line, they are hurting Iraqi people. "Sometimes Iraqis feel angry about the shortages, but this is our destiny, and we will get through it."

Asaad and Hayder are both grateful to the United States for Operation Iraqi Freedom. "They liberated us from Saddam — we now are enjoying opportunities we never had growing up."

Both brothers have firsthand experience with standing up for what is right. When Hayder was first hired, there were some issues about the quality of the work being performed by an Iraqi contractor, and his life was threatened. Hayder did not back down and was rewarded for his courage by receiving the courthouse project.

They both mourn the loss of a friend, a fellow engineer, who was recently shot and killed by an unknown assailant.

"We don't know who did it or why," Hayder said. "Our enemy is not well defined. It's hard to imagine the tragedy some of our friends and neighbors are living — a mother loses a son, a wife her husband."

Sometimes, the terrorists destroy a building that took a year to construct. "We need to keep fighting them. The most important thing is to keep going," Hayder said.

Both brothers have studied English since they were in elementary school. And all their engineering classes were taught in English.

"So our writing and reading skills in English are pretty good," Asaad explained. "But it's our conversational English that we still need to work on."

At night, when they return home, Hayder enjoys getting on the Internet and connecting into a chat room, talking to either Americans or Australians so he can practice and expand his English skills. For Asaad, he finds it relaxing to get out his brush, oil colors and canvas and paint a landscape.

Each hopes for the opportunity to earn a doctorate's degree at an American university.

## Top Iraqi, American officials honor Iraqi Army martyrs

Story and photo by  
**Spc. Erin Robicheaux**  
256th Brigade Combat Team  
Public Affairs

**CAMP JUSTICE, BAGHDAD, Iraq** — As a special monument was unveiled Aug. 4, Iraqi and U.S. officials honored four Iraqi Army Soldiers who gave their lives for the security of Iraq during the Ashura holiday.

Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq; and representatives from the offices of the Prime Minister of Iraq and the Minister of Interior, along with family members of the Soldiers, attended a ceremony at Camp Justice, home of the 1st Iraqi Army Brigade, 6th Division.

Doctor Ahmed Chalabi, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, said the country owed a great debt to the four Soldiers and their families and promised the Iraqi government would care for them in gratitude for the Soldiers' gift to the country.

"Words fall short to express the great sacrifice these Soldiers have made, and our work is to help those they left behind," he said. His office donated one-half million dinar to the families.

The Deputy Prime Minister also said the sacrifices of these Soldiers should not be taken in vain, and all citizens of Iraq must join the fight against terrorism. He extended his hand in the name of the Prime Minister to the people of his coun-

try to help in the fight against evil.

The success is already proven, he said — in fact, the very spot where the memorial now stands was once the same location of the 5th Intelligence Branch of the old regime.

"This was one of the most feared terrorist areas in all of Baghdad," Chalabi said. It is now the headquarters of the 1st Brigade, commanded by Brig. Gen. Jalil Khalaf Shwayel and Command Sgt. Maj. Hassan Abdul Kadum.

"The 1st Brigade is the hope of the Iraqi people," Chalabi said.

The four fallen Soldiers were killed in three separate incidents since the liberation of Iraq in 2003.

While on a mission in the vicinity of the Al Mufty Mosque in Wazeeria, Sgt. Basheer Adil Khamees Ali Al Hayali and Warrant Officer Naseer Abid Mohsin encountered a terrorist approaching a traffic point.

They "heroically prevented the advance of the terrorist, thus protecting the pilgrims of Ashura," said a document distributed by the 1st IA Bde.

The publication also praised Sgt. Saif Ali Husain Ameen, who shot a suicide bomber four times in the chest, while on a security mission at Antar Square. The terrorist detonated his explosives and took the life of the young sergeant. Saif's actions saved the lives of many Ashura pilgrims.

Sgt. Ali Majid Khalaf Menati was tasked to establish a traffic control point in the vicinity

of Al Iskan during the elections. He was killed when he noticed a suspicious man and interrupted his path to search him. While Sgt. Menati performed his duty, the man detonated a bomb taking both their lives. Menati's actions also saved lives of countless Iraqi citizens.

Lt. Gen. Daham Radi Al-Assal, a representative of the Minister of Defense, was also in attendance at the unveiling. He said the fallen Soldiers were the flag of Iraq who wrote, with their blood, the story of this country.

"They spread success and freedom throughout all of Iraq with their sacrifices, and they will never be forgotten," he said.

Petraeus said the successes of the 1st IA and heroism of the 1st Bde. Soldiers honored with the monument are proof of the training and mentorship programs established over the course of the last year.

"The mission is to help the Iraqi military force, not fight the fight for them," he said.

Petraeus said the numbers speak for themselves. Last year at this time, only three active IA battalions stood in existence; now



**Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Doctor Ahmed Chalabi, Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, and Brig. Gen. Jalil Khalaf Shwayel, commander of the 1st Iraqi Army Brigade, 6th Division, pay homage Aug. 4 to four fallen Soldiers of the 1st IA Bde.**

there are more than 100, and the number continues to rise.

"This is proof that the American and Multi-National Forces are doing what it takes to give the power to the Iraqi Army," said Petraeus. "This is a fight for the Iraqi people and its forces."



## Iraqi PM announces new security plan

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

**WASHINGTON** — Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafari announced a security plan building on the progress his country has already made.

Jafari spoke in Baghdad Aug. 4 following visits to Iraqi Security Forces training facilities.

The prime minister said through a translator that the security situation in the country is improving. Security forces are increasing in both quantity and quality, he said.

"Today I was in Hillah, and I inspected new graduates, 750 newly graduated personnel," he said. "I witnessed their training and their performance, and I'm very content with this level. I am quite content with the field commanders also. And hopefully they will continue to progress."

Jafari said terrorist groups are trying to disrupt the political process and the coming elections. "They tried to foil the previous elections. They failed," he said. The terrorists are trying to justify their evil deeds with nationalism and religion, he said, adding that killing children and destroying holy sites, mosques and churches is not a political statement, but murder.

He pledged that Iraq will continue to stand up to the insurgents. "Terrorists avoid areas where there is no sight of courage and no sight of courageous people," he said. "But this is not the case in Iraq."

Jafari gave general details of the plan. First, the country needs to improve intelligence coordination. "We have four centers to gather information, and they have been grouped under the name of Intelligence Coordination Center," he said. Gathering the intelligence and getting it to forces that can act on it is key.

The Iraqi government will also work on improving communications, and the Ministry of Defense will form a quick intervention forces.

Jafari said Iraqi Security Forces will follow up the successes of Operation Lightning to secure Baghdad and other areas. Operation Lightning deployed 40,000 members of the Iraqi security forces in Baghdad and its surroundings to interdict terrorists and stop the flow of personnel, money and materials to them.

Corruption and smuggling are serious problems in the country. Jafari's government has assigned the minister of planning and finance to follow up all corruption and smuggling activities. "We hope to increase the number of forces that follow up such subjects, and we hope to develop these forces not only by quantity, but also by quality," he said.

Finally, Jafari said, the government will work to protect the infrastructure and improve the judiciary.

# STARS AND STRIPES

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Withdrawal to be conditions-based, Coalition spokesman says

**WASHINGTON** — The withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq will be based strictly on security conditions in the country and the readiness of Iraqi Forces to conduct independent operations, a Multi-National Force - Iraq spokesman in Baghdad said July 28.

The United States will not withdraw forces until the Iraqi Security Forces meet conditions to be established by a joint commission, Air Force Brig. Gen. C. Donald Alston stressed in a news conference.

Army Gen. George W. Casey, commander of Multi-National Force - Iraq, said July 27 that substantial troop reductions could begin as early as spring or summer if the insurgency is put down and Iraqi Forces are ready to handle the security mission.

The commissioned-established conditions will cover the combat capability of the Iraqi Forces as well as the ability of the Iraqi government's ministries to sustain the forces and support them logistically, Alston said. The progress of Iraqi Forces, however, isn't something that can be measured only quantitatively, he explained.

"Combat capability is not just a function of numbers," he said. "It has a subjective quality in terms of the combat seasoning that is going on with Iraqi Security Forces, and that's, I think, more of an art — a subjective assessment — that the leaders are inputting to their assessments."

Joint readiness assessments are being conducted every month, Alston said, and the information gathered is giving leaders an idea of what the conditions for withdrawal should be. These assessments are important to ensure the transfer of authority is handled correctly, he said.

"This is critical we get this right," he said. "So we need to be as self-critical as we can be to continue to assess the readiness."

The Iraqi Forces continue to make progress toward achieving readiness, Alston said. The Iraqi Army now has eight ground divisions with 29 brigade headquarters and 101 battalions, he said. The Army also has a mechanized division with a brigade headquarters and two battalions, and three battalions undergoing training.

The training is being conducted in Iraq and Jordan by international and Iraqi trainers, he said. As the Iraqi Forces complete training, they join Coalition Forces in the field, and their presence aids operations significantly, he said.

"The increased numbers and growing capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces allow us to continue to put constant pressure on the insurgency," he said. (By Sgt. Sara Wood, American Forces Press Service.)

### Army creates mentorship web sites

**WASHINGTON** — The new Army Mentorship Community and Army Mentorship Resource Center web sites are now operational and available to those with Army Knowledge Online access.

As part of the new mentorship philosophy, "Leaving a Legacy Through Mentorship," the sites are designed to help bring mentors and mentees together.

All Active Component Soldiers, Reserve Component Soldiers, Department of Army Civilians, spouses, retirees, veterans, and contractors, who are authorized AKO access, are encouraged to participate in the program.

"Mentorship is not a new concept and has been a part of Army culture for years," said John McLaurin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Human Resources. "It is an extremely powerful tool for personal and professional development; it improves competence, leadership skills, self-awareness, morale, and retention."

Within the Army Mentorship Community, there are multiple tailored mentorship forums. Each forum offers the opportunity for open dialogue between voluntary mentors and those seeking advice, guidance, and mentorship. In these forums, open discussions are highly encouraged in order to help others develop and grow personally and professionally.

The Army Mentorship Resource Center offers valuable information for both mentors and mentees including related articles, a mentorship handbook, a sample Individual Development Action Plan, and a searchable mentorship profile server for mentors.

You can visit the Army Mentorship Resource Center at [mentorship.army.mil](http://mentorship.army.mil); from this site you can also log on to the AKO Army Mentorship Community. (By Beth E. Musselman, Army News Service.)

### Operation Thunder Cat nets 171 suspected terrorists

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and the 1st and 3rd Iraqi Army Brigades, 6th Division, conducted combined offensive operations called Operation Thunder Cat I July 26-30 — a series of cordon-and-attack missions that resulted in the capture of 171 suspected terrorists.

Thunder Cat was part of a much larger Task Force Baghdad operation called Operation Thunder. The focus of this operation and future operations is to disrupt and destroy the insurgency, said

*Continued on next page*

## 116 BCT awards first Combat Action Badges

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq** — The executive officer for the 116 Brigade Combat Team, representing the Commander of the 116 BCT, Brig. Gen. Alan Gayhart, made a special trip to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C., to present the unit's first Combat Action Badge awards to four Soldiers and Airmen of the Brigade, July 24.

Lt. Col. Lytle was able to combine his attendance at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pa., with the trip to visit these troops and to present them with the first Combat Action Badges to be awarded to the Brigade, which is stationed at FOB Warrior, northern Iraq supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

The Combat Action Badge was awarded to Tech Sgt. Jamie Dana, who was wounded while attached to Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 116th BCT; Spc. Jessie Ingram, 116 Engineer Battalion, wounded while attached to TF 1-163



*Courtesy photo*

**Spc. Jason Braase, of TF 2/116 Armor, holds his Combat Action Badge and certificate, after its presentation by Lt. Col. Robert Lytle, 116 BCT executive officer, July 24.**

Infantry; Spc. Jason Braase, of TF 2-116 Armor; and Spc. Kyle James, of TF 3-116 Armor.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

Brig. Gen. John Basilica Jr., 256th Bde. Combat Team commander.

"This operation was primarily an Iraqi Army mission, beginning with intelligence gathering, all the way through to the capture and detainment of the anti-Iraqi forces," he said. "Our brigade provided staff assistance to the Iraqi Security Forces and added combat power if needed."

Of the 127 suspected terrorists, 33 were specific brigade-level targets of the 1st Iraq Army Brigade captured by Soldiers from 2nd, 4th and 5th battalions.

"Operation Thunder Cat was an outstanding opportunity for the Iraqis to demonstrate their continued development into a fully operational combat unit," said Maj. Stuart Burruss, from New Orleans, executive officer for 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, who worked with the 5th Battalion, 1st IA Brigade during this operation.

"The 5th Bn. leaders did an outstanding job preparing for and executing the mission," he said.

This was proven by their performance, both technically and tactically sound. It was also shown by the high morale of the junior leaders and Soldiers, Burruss added.

One of the most successful operations belonged to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Iraqi Army Brigade, which captured 45 detainees in the west Abu Ghraib district of Baghdad. Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, 256th BCT, supported the mission by providing outer security.

Capt. Kurt Merseal from Steeleville, Mo., commander of Company C, 2/130th Inf. Bn., said the IA showed significant improvement throughout Thunder Cat. "The Iraqi Army has progressed so much as a team and unit, and it is satisfying for me to assist them in accomplishing our collective goal," he said.

"I noticed that the IA has improved their situational awareness, as well as working together as a team," said Staff Sgt. Ronald Floyd, a squad leader for C Co., 2/130th Inf. Bn., from Villa Grove, Ill. "As they improve, it helps Coalition Forces and Iraqi citizens move forward."

Joint missions involving forces from different commands creates challenges in planning, execution and reporting, which adds significant complexity to the operations, explained Basilica.

Operation Thunder Cat was the first time these challenges were managed using state-of-the-art computer networks to coordinate the efforts of the three brigades.

"The Iraqi Army has done a superb job, and I am very proud of what they accomplished. The measure of success for this

## All the way live!



U.S. Navy Photo by Chief Photographer's Mate Edward G. Martens  
**U.S. Army Soldiers from the Bravo Company, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, 155th Brigade Combat Team, participate in an evening live fire weapons training exercise at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iskandariyah, Iraq.**

operation is not only the number of insurgents captured, but proof positive of the Iraqi Army's growth as a military force. It is also a clear indication that they are becoming stronger and more capable as a team," Basilica exclaimed. (By 1st Lt. Taysha Deaton, 256th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs.)

### Safehouse destroyed, 10 suspects detained

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Coalition Forces conducted a raid in western Ramadi early Aug. 3 resulting in the capture of 10 suspected terrorists.

Upon arrival at the intended target, a local Iraqi citizen confirmed the building was being used as a terrorist safehouse.

When forces approached the building several suspected terrorists fled throughout the surrounding area. Six suspected terrorists were immediately detained, and four were captured after they hid inside a nearby Mosque.

Iraqi citizens assisted the Coalition Forces by pointing out the hiding place of the four suspects. The building was then destroyed by attack helicopters. Secondary explosions were seen. Additionally, improvised explosive device materials and weapons were found in the safehouse during the post-strike search.

The 10 suspected terrorists were detained for further questioning.

## Worship and Prayer Schedule for the International Zone

*All services at the Community Center Chapel unless otherwise noted*

### Sunday

**9:30 a.m.** — Choir Rehearsal  
**10 a.m.** — Catholic Mass (Camp Prosperity)  
**10:30 a.m.** — General Christian Worship  
**Noon** — Episcopal/Lutheran/Anglican  
**2 p.m.** — Latter Day Saints  
**4 p.m.** — Catholic Confession  
**4:30 p.m.** — Catholic Mass  
**6 p.m.** — Contemporary Protestant

### Monday-Friday

**11 a.m.** — Bible Study (Fri.)  
**Noon** — Catholic Mass (Mon.-Thurs.)  
**Noon** — Catholic Communion Service (Fri.)  
**5:30 p.m.** — Catholic Mass (Fri. at Camp Steel Dragon)  
**6 p.m.** — Catholic Bible Study (Wed.)  
**6 p.m.** — Jewish Shabbat Services (Fri.)  
**7:30 p.m.** — Prayer Service (Tue.)  
**8 p.m.** — Bible Study (Tue-Thurs.)  
**8 p.m.** — "The Measure of a Man" series (Mon.)

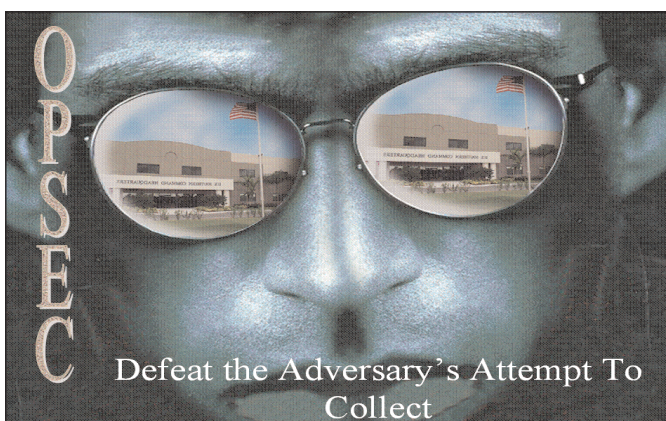
### Saturday

**9 a.m.** — 7th Day Adventist (CSH)  
**10 a.m.** — Catholic Mass (CSH)  
**12:30 p.m.** — Buddhist Prayer  
**4 p.m.** — Catholic Confession  
**4:30 p.m.** — Catholic Mass  
**8 p.m.** — Alpha Course

### Daily Islamic Prayer

*See schedules posted at prayer locations.*

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Balad	107.3 FM	Tal Afar	107.3 FM
Fallujah	105.1 FM	Taqquadum	107.3 FM
Kirkuk	107.3 FM	Tikrit	100.1 FM

## Freedom Radio





# GODS OF TOW

## Marine maintenance detachment rescues disabled vehicles

By Sgt. Kristin S. Jochums  
2nd Force Service Support Group

**ALASAD, Iraq** — Adopting the names of Greek gods, such as Zeus and Achilles, are the “Gods of Tow.” Though they may not travel down the road from Mount Olympus, they do travel the ones throughout western Iraq.

The “Gods of Tow” make up the wrecker section, Maintenance Detachment, Combat Logistics Battalion 2, 2nd Force Service Support Group, and their mission is to provide recovery support for all vehicles that become disabled within their area of operations.

“We are the Marine Corps’ ‘AAA,’” said Cpl. Matthew B. Kennedy, a vehicle recovery operator, wrecker section. “You can call on us any time, day or night, and we are ready to go.”

“I drive a big tow truck,” said the East Lansing, Mich., native as he laughed.

The Marines are responsible to recover broken-down, blown-up, flipped-over and wrecked gear. They do anything dealing with recovery and crane support.

“It doesn’t matter if it’s Marine Corps gear or not. If it’s in our area of operations we go pick it up,” said Sgt. Carlos Xavier, noncommissioned officer in charge of the wrecker section.

They also support all of

CLB-2’s convoys going outside the wire by inserting a wrecker with each convoy, and at the same time supporting everything else that happens with any other unit’s convoys and the missions other units have within the area.

“We’ve been extremely busy — busier than we wanted to be — but it’s not a problem for us because all five of us within this section love doing our jobs,” the Houston native said.

In the five months the five Marines have been here, they have logged in more than 145 missions, recovered more than 102 pieces of gear and totaled approximately 30,000 road miles. All together they have put in more than 3,000 hours of road time.

It does not matter what time the call comes in, 2 p.m. or 2 a.m., the Marines are always enthusiastic about going out on a recovery mission, said Xavier.

“No matter the situation at the scene, you always have to come up with a way of hooking that vehicle up and getting it back to base,” Xavier said. “We have to be good at coming up with things on the spot; it’s nothing like what they teach you at school.”

During a routine convoy, Sgt. Stuart M. Parris, vehicle recovery operator, used his skills and quick thinking to assist in saving the life of a Marine after a vehicle struck a double-stacked mine.

The explosion flipped the Humvee, killing the convoy commander and trapping the driver underneath the vehicle.

After the call came over the radio and not knowing what to expect, Parris had to start preparing himself for the situation up ahead.

“Not 10 seconds after the blast they were yelling over the radio for the wrecker to get up there,” said Parris, a Louisville, Ky., native.

“I could tell from their voices it was

bad. I had to take the wrecker about 50 meters into the desert to make sure I did not hit a mine.”

Parris made his way to the site with the wrecker and used the wrecker to lift the vehicle so the driver could be removed.

“I had no idea what vehicle was hit, but I knew I was going to have to pick the vehicle up with the crane on the wrecker,” he continued. “All of the attention was focused on the driver’s side of the Humvee. The driver, a female Marine, was being crushed by the wreckage. Some of the wreckage was resting on her head; her Kevlar probably saved her life.”

During hectic situations the Marines with the Wrecker Section maintain their composure and get the task at hand done.

“I had to maintain control and a level head,” Parris said. “We made a rig to pick up the wreckage and safely removed the Marine from underneath the vehicle. Even with all of the chaos and confusion, Marines stepped up and did their jobs, made sound decisions and put emotion aside.”

Xavier said they are called the “Gods of Tow” because they are the best at what they do. They come up with on-the-spot hookups and make sure every vehicle makes it back to base.

“Not only do we have to hook up to these vehicles, but we have to make sure it’s done safely, especially when you have to tow these vehicles a distance of up to 250 miles,” Xavier said. “I think we have stepped up to that challenge from the first day we got into this country.”

“We will never fail at any mission brought to us,” he added. “Every vehicle that leaves the gate will make it back.”



The Marines from the wrecker section, Maint. Det., CLB-2, 2nd FSSG, pose beneath an American flag flying between two of their recovery vehicles. Their mission is to provide recovery support for all vehicles that become disabled within their area of operations.

Courtesy photo





The CAOC is a true total force, joint and Coalition team, staffed by active duty, guard and reserve forces from the U.S. and Coalition partners — including personnel from (left to right) the Royal Australian Air Force, U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, British Royal Air Force, New Zealand Air Force and Canadian Air Force.

# CAOC

## *One-of-a-kind Coalition team supports OIF, OEF*

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Chyenne A. Griffin  
U.S. Central Command Air Forces Forward  
Public Affairs

**Southwest Asia** — The Central Air Forces Combined Air Operations Center is a true Total Force, joint and Coalition team, staffed by active duty, guard and reserve forces from the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and Coalition partners — including air force and army elements from Australia, Japan, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Republic of Korea and Singapore.

“The partnership between the people of these great nations and services is solid,” said Lt. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan, III, Combined Forces Air Component commander. “It is based on a shared commitment to peace and freedom.”

The capability created by this advanced operations center has changed the next generation of warfare and furthered the commitment to the Global War on Terrorism. The CAOC — both team members and equipment — became fully operational Feb. 18, 2003, and stands as the only warfighting Coalition operations center of its kind currently in the Southwest Asia theater of operations. Patriots from all these different nations have worked side-by-side planning and executing operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and Joint Task Force — Horn of Africa ever since.

On an average day, Coalition members at the CAOC control approximately 70 combat sorties, 30 combat support sorties, 140 airlift sorties and 40 tanker sorties. Many of these sorties provide protection to Coalition ground forces, support ground force operations, and deter attacks on people and infrastructure in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Royal Air Force Air Commodore Mike Barnes, U.K. Air Component commander, said that for U.K. personnel to work in this environment is a golden opportunity.

“Not only are we delighted to contribute to the Coalition, but we are excited to have the opportunity to exchange views and ideas with those who have similar doctrines to ourselves,” the commodore said.

“Understanding the inner workings of various nations’ ground and air operations is an extremely good learning experience for us all.”

Inter-service rivalries, proud national histories, language barriers and different ways to do the same thing occur on a daily basis, but nothing has proved insurmountable.

“Where the rubber meets the road it’s all serious,” said Lt. Col. Tom W. McKnight, deputy Marine Corps liaison officer.

“Inter-service rivalry is part of inter-service pride, and I’d be disappointed if there wasn’t a little bit of good-natured pride in the workplace.”

Commander Kenneth J. Reynard, Navy and amphibious liaison element officer, said he’s very proud of this assignment and has learned more from this tour than any other.

“I’ve learned more in a hundred days here than in nearly two years’ worth of joint assignments,” he said. “This is a true operational environment with a higher mission and more intense focus. It’s a very small contingent of people with a lot of very different, and very important, responsibilities. It makes you very proud to be a part of it all.”

That pride and morale serves the joint and Coalition operations officers well as they maintain a round-the-clock presence and serve as liaisons between their

nations’ headquarters and Central Command headquarters elements, along with monitoring, scheduling, executing and supporting their assets in theater in support of Combined Forces Air Component Command’s intent and objectives. All the while they ensure compliance with their owning nation, host nation, CENTCOM and CENTAF policies and rules of engagement.

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***“Inter-service rivalry is part of inter-service pride, and I’d be disappointed if there wasn’t a little bit of good-natured pride in the workplace.”***

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*Lt. Col. Tom W. McKnight*

coordination, synchronization and fusion in the CAOC.”

Barnes agreed. “We remain fully engaged with our Coalition partners and our host-nation governments,” he said. “Our aims and intent are aligned — we will do whatever it takes to ensure that peace and stability remain enduring.”

The CFACC says the Coalition partnership at this one-of-a-kind weapon system called the CAOC continues to provide all who work within its walls experience and exposure with war doctrine.

“We’re working with our international partners to remove the causes that enabled terrorism to take root and ensure that these countries do not revert to an ungoverned land used as a safe haven by terrorists,” Buchanan said. “Through our global partnerships, we are sending a message to our enemies that there is not a place in the world where they are safe.”

“This is very much a joint and Coalition fight,” said Brig. Gen. Allen G. Peck, Deputy Combined Forces Air Component commander. “Joint Force Commanders set the operational objectives, and airpower has a key role in achieving those objectives — all of which could not be done without robust, 24/7 operations and intelligence



# Airmen provide exams before, after interrogations

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Tudor  
Air Force Print News

**ABU GHRAIB, Iraq** — Iraqi detainees at the prison here receive medical examinations before and after interrogation thanks to an independent group of Air Force medics.

The detainee health care team monitors and maintains the health of about 2,000 detainees who are “actively undergoing interrogation,” said Maj. Carol, the leader of the team here. Her last name, and others’, are withheld for security. “It’s a unique mission. Our role is to provide independent care for the detainees.”

According to the staff, that independence is key. To screen the detainees, the team is given a schedule each day. Their patients are usually seen in groups in a well-guarded holding facility. The screening room is small and there is always a translator on hand, said Capt. Paul, a physician’s assistant assigned to the duty.

Every patient is given a basic exam — eyes, ears, nose and throat — as well as a litany of other tests, Paul said.

Exams can take a few minutes or longer, the major said. The screening team provides exams for about 20 to 25 detainees each day.

Once a detainee passes the exam, he is interrogated. While the detainee undergoes interrogation, a member of the detainee health care team is on hand.

“We’re not involved in the interrogation process. We have no part in that,” Carol said. “We simply say if a detainee is a ‘go’ or a ‘no go’ for interrogation.”

The team cares for detainees throughout the interrogation phase done at the joint interrogation and debriefing center inside Abu Ghraib. While Abu Ghraib serves as a prison for Iraqi criminals, those the United States deals with are detainees, not prisoners.

Detainees here are held because they serve some value to military intelligence, having been caught committing acts of violence against Coalition Forces or civilians, Abu Ghraib officials said.



Photo by Master Sgt. Scott Wagers

**Maj. Carol and Senior Airman Estaban, whose last names are withheld for security purposes, are part of an independent group of Air Force medics who maintain the health of detainees at Abu Graib prison. The people serving at the prison live in the cell blocks that once housed victims of Saddam Hussein’s regime.**

Detainees still receive a level of doctor-patient confidentiality, Carol said. If more extensive care is needed, the Army medics handle it.

One of the challenges the team faces is providing care properly, Paul said.

“They are 100 years behind here medically,” he said. “A 40-year-old is going to look like a 60-year-old.”

Along with Carol and Paul, Senior Airman Estaban, a medical technician, and an independent medical technician are on hand to ensure a detainee’s health during interrogations.

“We were brought in here to ensure that process is sound,” Carol said.

To ensure that, diagnoses are made on the conservative side, Paul said.

“If a guy comes in and says he got hit, but it doesn’t look like he got hit, we’re still going to check it out,” he said.

There is also the issue of directly dealing with the detainees. Carol, a family practice specialist, said she still gets Iraqis who are offended a woman is caring for them. Paul said inmates will occasionally give him “the eye.” Sometimes, they will even test the medics.

“One detainee might say, ‘I have a chest pain,’ and be 21 years old. They’ll lie to get out of the interrogation,” he said.

Paul said on some days, the care he provides the detainees is more difficult to give.

“You could have a guy who just shot six Marines and had the sniffles,” he said.

“You just have to give him something and move on.”

“I have to remember that I am a professional,” Estaban said. “When it gets difficult, I take a break and read a surfing magazine. That helps.”

Ensuring that the mission the Air Force providers do is separate and distinct — fair interrogation process — is important to Estaban. His four-month rotation as an expeditionary medical technician has been “different.”

“It’s a lot more than I expected,” he said. “We’re here to oversee things medically according to the Geneva Convention, and that’s important.”

## U.S. Soldiers give Tawaita children ‘happy feet’

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Brody  
2nd Brigade Combat Team  
Public Affairs

**TAWAITHA, Iraq** — Soldiers from Company F, 26th Forward Support Battalion, brought smiles to Tawaita children as they distributed hundreds of shoes and toys near a landfill July 23.

The community of squatters who live in



**Capt. Charles Price, commander of F Co., 26th Forward Support Battalion, helps a girl into a new pair of shoes.**

the landfill, located near the Rasheed Airfield, often suffer foot injuries caused by walking over sharp debris without shoes.

The F Co. troops, who operate in direct support of 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, set up a perimeter to secure the site and quickly began fitting children with sneakers.

“It’s a great thing to come out and do something to raise the standard of living out here a bit,” said Capt. Charles Price, commander of F Co., 26th FSB. “This area is all landfill, and bad guys drop bodies and explosives here all the time — it’s a dangerous place to live.”

The mission was made possible from donations by church groups and family members at Fort Stewart, Ga.

A church group in Pennsylvania also donated about 300 pairs of sneakers to the effort, while Lt. Col. Steven Merkel, 1/9 FA commander and a native of Fort Wayne, Ind., coordinated for clothing donations from Fort Stewart.

Chaplain (Capt.) Charlie Lee, 1/9 FA, brought stuffed animals along on the mission, which were a big hit with residents of all ages.

“This place reminds me somewhat of Korea after the war,” Lee, of Buffalo Grove, Ill., said. “As a chaplain, I want to help share

what we have with the neediest Iraqi people.”

Lee fitted several ecstatic children with running shoes and watched them dash off to show their families.

“This kind of thing builds good relationships — you can tell everyone really appreciates it,” Lee said.

Although it was F Co.’s first purely humanitarian mission in Iraq, Soldiers said they were well prepared for the crowd that quickly gathered around the Humvees.

“We never announce these things beforehand, which makes it safer for everyone,” said Staff Sgt. Guillermo Blanco, F Co., 26th FSB, patrol noncommissioned officer in charge. “These people here are just trying to survive — they don’t have anything, so it makes me feel great to see the little kids smile when they see our trucks coming.”

Blanco, from El Salvador, fitted children with shoes and helped keep the crowd orderly as Soldiers tossed water bottles, food rations, clothing and stuffed animals from the cargo bed of a light medium tactical vehicle.



**Soldiers from F Co., 26th FSB, toss stuffed animals to children during a humanitarian aid mission in Tawaita, Iraq.**

After the operation, Price contemplated the long-term significance of the operation.

“To win this country over to peace and democracy, it all starts with the kids,” said Price, of Columbus, Ohio. “Ten years from now, these kids will be creating the future direction of Iraq.”



# U.S. Army engineers build new barracks for IA



**Sgt. Ciro G. Romero and Pfc. Timothy J. Russo mark a piece of wood for their next cut. Romero, of Queens, N.Y., and Russo, of Newport Richey, Fla., both serve with B Co., 92nd Eng. Bn.**

**Story and photo by Sgt. Andrew A. Miller**  
Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — With the smell of sawdust hanging heavy in the air, the Soldiers cut and hammer away at their latest project — turning a parking garage into a barracks. This complicated project and others like it are critical to the ongoing shift of responsibility from U.S. to Iraqi units.

The newly-converted barracks will soon be a home for Soldiers of the Iraqi Army.

“Anything we can do to get [Iraqi Security Forces] set so they can take on the responsibilities for their mission helps,” said Lt. Col. Keith Landry, 92nd Engineer Battalion commander, who was visiting his Soldiers and the work site recently.

This is not the first project the 92nd Engineers have tackled in support of the Iraqi Security Forces. It is, however, significant.

“This is probably the largest single project that we’ve worked on,” Landry said.

The former garage is being divided into 20 large rooms, with a total capacity of more than 800 Soldiers, he added.

Sgt. 1st Class Sheila Stewart of Company B, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the site, says her engineers are more than up to the task. The Soldiers began June 21 and plan to complete the transformation in just over a month, Stewart said.

To accomplish their mission, the engineers are building walls, running wires and fixing an existing drainage system. The carpenters, electricians and plumbers of the crew

each face unique challenges with this project.

Spc. Michael A. Hasselbrick, an electrician with B Co., said Iraqi wiring is a little different than in the U.S.

“In the states, cables are labeled,” Hasselbrick said. “Not here,” he added with a smile.

But Hasselbrick is lucky, he said, because his supervisor, Staff Sgt. Martin Clark, has experience with electrical work here from a previous tour of duty. Accordingly, he was able to watch and learn.

Several Soldiers at the site said they value these kinds of challenges.

“It’s a good experience,” said Hasselbrick. “You learn a lot when there are so many obstacles to overcome.”

Supplying this massive project has been a challenge, although that job is now nearly complete.

“We’ve sent out several [large cargo trucks] and trailer-loads full of wood,” Landry said, “and right now we’re just waiting on the air conditioner units to finish the project up.”

The Soldiers working on the project seem to be enjoying themselves as they work, despite the cruel heat. With all the sights, sounds and smells of a construction site in the United States, it might be easy to concentrate on work and forget where the site lies on the map. As all the work adds up, an old parking garage begins to look like a military barracks.

Whether they are building for their fellow U.S. service members or for their Iraqi allies, Landry said, the 92nd Engineers love to get out and do the job.

“We’re doing a lot of good things here,” he said, looking proud.

## Marne finance office first of its kind in Iraq

**3rd Infantry Division, Division Support Brigade Public Affairs**

**CAMP LIBERTY, BAGHDAD, Iraq** — The 3rd Infantry Division finance company is the first of its type to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“We are the first Army finance company to deploy under the Army’s transformation process,” said Maj. Richard Santiago, the company commander for the 3rd Finance Company, 3rd Soldier Support Battalion, Division Support Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

Santiago, whose unit was formerly known as the 24th Finance Battalion, said the company consists of a little more than 130 Soldiers and is composed of six finance detachments geographically dispersed throughout Iraq.

The Soldiers were assigned throughout a variety of U.S. Army posts before they deployed to Iraq, Santiago said.

Santiago, who is from San Juan, Puerto Rico, said 3rd Fin. Co. itself comprises the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, along with A and C Detachments. Each detachment is made up of Soldiers from three Georgia installations: Forts Benning and Stewart, as well as Hunter Army Air Field.

In addition to the Marne Soldiers, Santiago said the company is augmented by troops from three units outside the 3rd Inf. Div., including Det. A, 10th Soldier Support Bn., Fort Drum, N.Y.; Det. C, 177th Fin. Bn., 2nd Inf. Div. in Korea; and Det. 3153, 83rd Troop Command, Florida Army National Guard.

The 3rd Fin. Co., nicknamed “The Marne Paymasters,” integrated these three detachments while ensuring a successful transfer

with their predecessors, the 15th Finance Battalion, said Sgt. Maj. William D. Hall, the 3rd Finance Company sergeant major.

When their company replaced a battalion, the paymasters knew they had a big job ahead of them.

“We are currently providing finance support to active duty and Reserve Component Soldiers, Airmen, Marines, U.S. contractors and Coalition Forces during OIF III,” said Santiago.

Adapting to transition and modularity, the Soldiers of the 3rd Fin. Co. were up to the challenging task.

“Our Soldiers flawlessly maintained accurate accountability of more than \$122 million weekly while supporting contracting, developmental funds for Iraq, Commander’s Emergency Response Program, paying agent and cashier operations at nine remote locations with no loss of funds,” Santiago said.

Spc. Sam H. Kriegler, a finance specialist with 3rd Fin. Co., said all documents and tracking transactions are first checked and logged in by him when they come into his office here.

Then they are checked again by the next internal control point — another step in the quality assurance process, said Kriegler, who lives in Hinesville, Ga.

More importantly, the unit’s internal quality controls are attributed to its pre-deployment planning regarding effective customer service of Soldiers’ needs.

Consequently, one of the first OIF III priorities for the paymasters was setting up their own Accountable Dispersing Station Number before deploying to Iraq, said Sgt. 1st Class Danny D. Young, noncommissioned officer in charge of internal control and military pay.

Young, a Battle Creek, Mich., native, said

the account tracking tool gives them a direct link with the Defense Finance and Accounting System at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind. They can quickly clear up any pay problems that come along.

The unit’s meticulous tracking resulted in excellent performance ratings during two quality assurance inspections, said Santiago. The Soldiers have displayed solid improvements in both finance operations and customer service. Customer service is the key.

“During this deployment, our Soldiers processed timely deployment entitlements for more than 98 percent of the 3rd Infantry Division’s Soldiers and other supported units within 30 days after arrival into theater,” said Hall.

Additionally, Santiago said, they provide basic check cashing services, as well as casual pay for Soldiers needing ready available cash.

Sgt. Brenda L. Cohen, a finance NCO, said the unit has a good system for casual pay.

Military customers are allowed to draw up to \$350 of casual pay per calendar month, said the Ocala, Fla., native. Once the customer’s withdrawal history is verified and the casual pay is approved, the clerk enters the pay request into the Deployable Dispersing System, and the customer is on



Photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

**Working through a power outage, (right to left) Pfc. John Prettyboy, Aubrey Gonzales and Michael Shadel, all finance clerks with A Co., 3rd SSB, provide customer service by window light at the Camp Liberty finance office.**

his or her way to the cashier’s cage.

The DDS is another first for the 3rd Fin. Co. The system assists in tracking customer transactions accurately. Working long hours, the Soldiers have successfully implemented the new system in all of their remote locations, said Santiago.

Additionally, they simultaneously introduced the use of U.S. Treasury Checks into the finance operations.

Continuing to streamline the automated pay process, Santiago said the Treasury checks are very helpful for contractors. This optional form of payment keeps them from having to carry around large sums of cash.

Santiago said they also plan to have an electronic fund transfer system in place in the near future and hope to disperse Iraqi dinars for local contractors before redeploying.



## CHAPLAIN'S TALK

## My wife hired a lawn service!

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Jerry Powell  
Multi-National Force - Iraq  
Deputy Command Chaplain

I cannot believe that my wife is spending my money to hire a lawn service to mow my yard!"

What does that sentence say to you? Sounds like someone is upset? Sounds like someone is possessive? (Count the "my" words used.) Is someone trying to control?

Being in a war zone so far away from home can affect how we react to life's conditions. There are a lot of issues that develop when we are in a hostile fire zone. One of the issues that we encounter is centered on control. We actually have very little control over our lives here. Where we live, where we work, who we are around, what we eat ... we really have little control over any of them. That can bother us. We generally like to believe that we are in control of our lives. Yet the more we see happen around us, we realize that we have very little control over much of what happens.

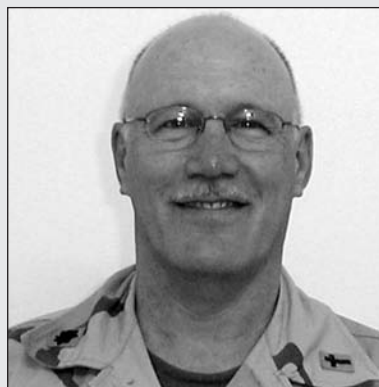
Sometimes when we realize how little control we have, we try to take control of other people or other situations. It can be difficult not to try to control someone or something back home. We can try to control or manage a house or family from thousands of miles away. Is that really fair?

If your partner tried to tell you what to do here, how to perform your mission, or how to do your job, you would not believe they had any idea what they were talking about. "When you go on patrol, I want to make sure you..." or "When you go to work, I want you to tell your boss ...." We would never consider that they had any expertise in our situation because they are not here and they do not understand.

And yet, we want to tell them how to run the house and children and do the yard and maintain the vehicles and pay the bills. "Of course, chaplain, because when I am there ...." That is just the point I want to make. You only know what it is like when you are there. Now you are not there and you do not know what it is like when you are not in the picture. Only your partner knows what life is like without you home.

One of my friends was upset when his wife hired a lawn service for their small yard. "I can mow that yard in 20 minutes, and she hired some guy to do it?" He was upset about her decision. Yet, she was also taking care of a newborn, a two-year-old and a five-year-old. She could not get the mower started and besides, who watches the children while she mows the yard? Her life is less complicated by paying the neighbor to handle that problem. Mowing the yard was never a problem when he was there, but now life is different. He was ready to start a fight with his wife over the lawn service until he understood that she is doing the very best she could while he was gone. He had no business trying to run the household when he was not there.

Can you trust your partner while you are gone? Do you believe that he or she is doing the very best he or she can without you? They trust you to do your job the best you can and come home safely. Will you trust them to do the same? Your partner will get stronger while you are gone because they have to be independent and make decisions. Will you give them permission to grow and develop? The word to practice from thousands of miles away is "trust."



Chaplain Powell



U.S. Air Force photo

Airman 1st Class Catherine Dilena gets an unexpected visit from her mother, Sheri Dilena. Catherine is a client support administrator with the 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron here and is deployed from Scott Air Force Base, Ill. Her mom is a morale, welfare and recreation coordinator at a nearby forward-deployed location.

## Airman receives visit from contractor mom in Iraq

By Tech. Sgt. Melissa Phillips  
407th Air Expeditionary Group  
Public Affairs

**ALI BASE, Iraq** — Airman 1st Class Catherine Dilena did not know what to think when her first sergeant dropped by her office on July 27 and told her to stand by to meet with him in a few minutes.

Nervously, the 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron client support administrator here waited for him to return, mentally running through a checklist of reasons why he would want to speak with her.

A few minutes later, instead of chatting with her first sergeant, she received a counseling session of sorts from an unexpected visitor — her mom.

"It was surreal to see my mom standing there," said Catherine, who is deployed from Scott Air Force Base, Ill. "I was really shocked, but everyone else knew."

Sheri Dilena, a contracted morale, welfare and recreation coordinator who works at a nearby forward-deployed installation, decided it was time to see her daughter. The last time the two saw each other was August 2004.

Sheri is signed up for a one-year tour in Iraq to provide programs and facilities where service members can relax on their off-duty time.

For six years, she volunteered to teach dance lessons to service members attending the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center at the Presidio of Monterey, Calif.

"I worked with a command sergeant major who showed me the ropes," Sheri said. "He told me [my swing classes] provided troops more than just morale; it gave them mental

stimulation to help them with their studies and brought down their stress level."

So when he called and told her she should be here in Iraq helping, she went.

"I'm really happy [to be here in Iraq]," Sheri said. "It's beyond words ... beyond satisfaction. I've met a lot of troops." Troops who are her daughter's age and need help to get through long deployments away from loved ones and friends.

Although Airman Dilena says she is proud of her mother, her immediate reaction to her mom's decision to serve in Iraq was not one of joy.

"I was upset," Catherine said. "I didn't want her to come over here. I still don't."

"But I think it's awesome that my mom cares about how [service members] are doing here mentally."

Catherine is not the only baby in the family to fly the coop and join the Air Force. Her brother, Airman

Jonathan Dilena, will soon graduate from technical school to become a security forces specialist, and his future could include a deployment here.

And his mom can rest assured that at most locations somebody else's mom or dad, brother or sister will be there to help him enjoy his off-duty time — just like her.

"It's a privilege to serve over here. It's a step off from what I was already ... at the Presidio ... and now here I am working with them in the midst of the stress ... helping," Sheri said.

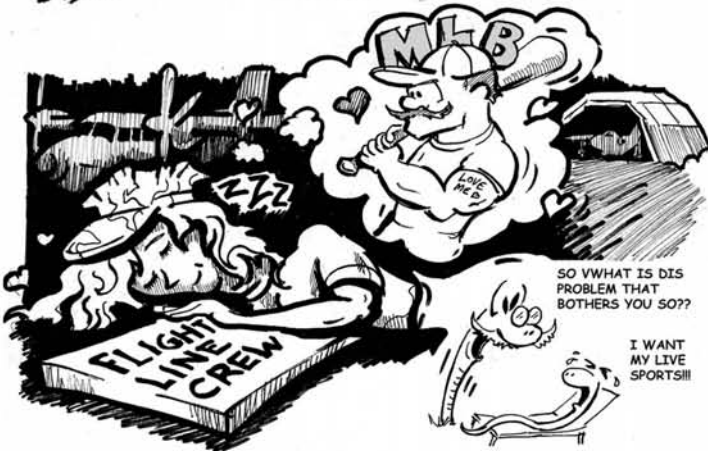
For now, both women are pushing aside the stress of serving in a war zone together to concentrate on enjoying each other's company for a few days — and just might fit in an impromptu swing dance session.





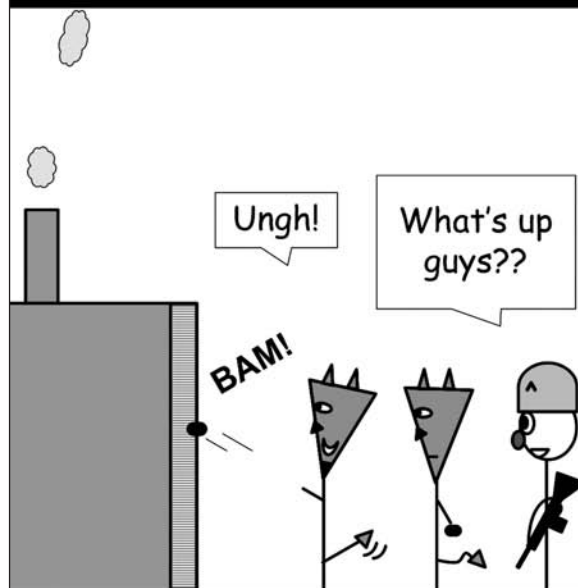
# Scimitar Slapstick

## SWEET DREAMS... IN IRAQ!



Art by Staff Sgt. Timothy Lawn

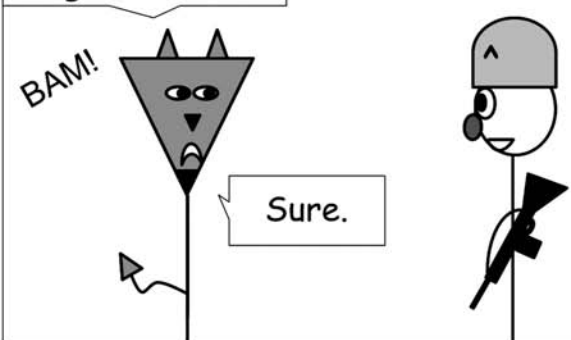
## Downrange



WWW.DOWNRANGEWEB.COM

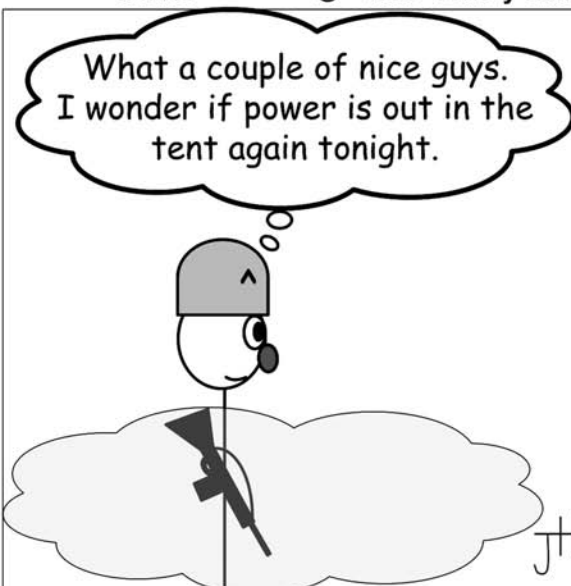
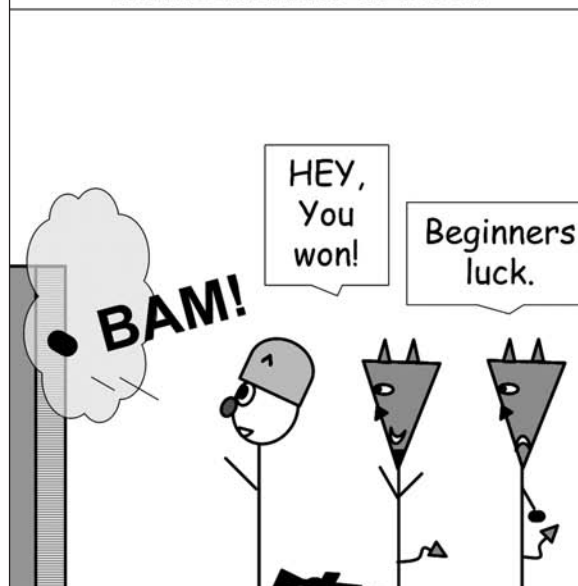
It's a game called "chuckin rocks at the generator". We play it every night at 8:00.

Hey that sounds like fun! Can I chuck one?



8/12/05

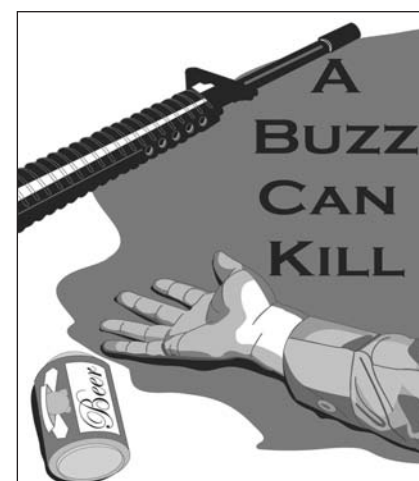
© 2005 Jeffery Hall



Art by Jeffery Hall



Art by Maj. James D. Crabtree



Story, photo, art and comic submissions are welcome! Please send to the *Scimitar* for consideration at:

[scimitar@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:scimitar@iraq.centcom.mil)



# Tennessee Soldiers keep it all in the family

Story and photo by Pfc. Dan Balda  
4th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Chris Cartwright and his older brother John Cartwright Jr. are racing around on a tank with their father, John Cartwright, during his National Guard unit's drill weekend.

They are having the time of their life, but as young boys, they're oblivious to the impression this ride will make on their lives down the road.

Fast forward 20-odd years, and the boys, like their father, are serving in the Army Reserve in Troop F, 278th Regimental Combat Team, and are deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 3.

They still ride on tanks with their father. There's just one caveat: despite the fact both boys have grown up to be noncommissioned officers — Chris a sergeant, Junior a corporal — their dad is now their first sergeant.

Both sons enjoy working with their father despite the good-natured ribbing they endure for being the first sergeant's kids.

Junior is stationed in a different area because the unit does not want all the family members serving in the same area for security reasons. But that doesn't mean he is exempt from the teasing.

"We catch heat all the time for being the first sergeant's kids, even though I am hundreds of miles away," Junior said. "It hasn't really affected me at all. I just work hard, and I know I've done my job."

The family is used to working with each other. Their father owns a construction and



**1st Sgt. John Cartwright (right) and his two sons, Cpl. John Cartwright Jr. (left) and Sgt. Chris Cartwright, are all assigned to the same Army Reserve unit, Troop F, 278th Regimental Combat Team, and are currently attached to the 3rd Infantry Division for Operation Iraqi Freedom.**

contracting business in their hometown of Bristol, Tenn. He employs Chris and works with Junior whenever the job permits.

"They've been working with me since they were boys," John said.

Chris enjoys working for his father saying,

"It helps bring us closer together."

Talking to all three men, it is easy to picture them at a job site, sharing a cup of coffee and a joke. They tease each other with the reckless abandon only family members can know.

But the jokes stop when dad dispenses the wisdom gained over a lifetime of service to his country.

John has been in the Army for 35 years and has been with the unit 25 years, making him the longest-serving member of the troop. He sees his whole troop as family.

"We've always wanted to be deployed together," John said. He feels that the unit cohesion goes a long way in making the time go by faster. "The whole unit feels like a family, so having my boys here is just an extension of that."

John said his wife is a little worried about them all being deployed together, but as he says, "There is not much she can do about it."

This is the longest Junior has been away from his father and brother.

"It's weird being stationed away from them and wondering what they are doing and how they are handling everything," he said. "They are always wondering what I'm doing. We have instant messenger so that helps a little bit."

The brothers don't worry about being in danger so much, but their father is a little worried about his boys.

"It's a lot harder on me, being a first sergeant and a father, than it is on them," John said. "I haven't run into it yet, but it could be hard sending my boys out on a dangerous mission."

"He couldn't keep me off a mission if I really wanted to go out," Junior said. "I'm going out one way or another."

## Clinic trained for routine, ready for unexpected

Story and photo by  
Spc. Matthew Wester  
3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division  
Public Affairs

**TAJI, Iraq** — "You never know what is going to roll up to the door," said Capt. Jacqueline L. Graul, brigade nurse for 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division.



**Sgt. Janeice M. Brooks (left), a medic for C Co., 125th FSB, 3rd Bde., 1st Armored Division, instructs a group of medics on how to administer an IV at Cobra Troop Medical Clinic at Camp Taji, Iraq.**

Graul is part of the staff at "Cobra" Clinic, run by Company C, 125th Forward Support Battalion, 3rd Bde., 1st Armored Div., which provides for the medical needs of Soldiers at Camp Taji.

The clinic has a very diverse mission. The staff conducts morning and evening sick calls; supports explosive ordnance teams and provides medics at the battalion and company levels within the brigade, according to Capt.

Michelle L. Auck, a physician's assistant for C Co. from Bowling Green, Ohio.

It provides all the services of a battalion aid station plus lab, dental, x-ray and trauma services, said Capt. Peter A. Ramos, commander of C Co., from Fort Riley, Kan.

The clinic is equipped with a trauma room, which can be set up quickly to treat emergency cases,

and examination rooms used for private patient consultation and routine medical examinations.

"The bulk of our mission has been sick call," he said. "We have had some trauma. Thankfully, it hasn't been much."

One trauma episode recently put the Soldiers at the clinic to the test when they treated and stabilized three Soldiers injured in a bomb blast the afternoon of July 8. The staff was training for the same kind of incident that morning.

The shift from daily troop medical clinic duties to trauma care happened quickly as medical providers put their training into action.

"It was an adrenaline rush," Auck said. "All the training came together, and everybody knew what they were doing."

"With everyday sick call, it isn't as intense," said Sgt. 1st Class Delores A. Livingston, non-commissioned officer in charge at Cobra Clinic and a Charleston, Mo., native. "With trauma, we go head-to-toe with each patient. [The medics] didn't leave anything undone. Everybody double-checked everybody else."

When trauma cases come in, teams are assigned to deal with each patient. The members of the teams have specific responsibilities during treatment and stabilization.

"Everybody on the trauma team has a role and prepares in advance of the casualty," said Dr. (Maj.) Gregory Martin, a San Antonio resident and clinic physician for C Co.

Martin explained one medic is in charge of giving the casualty oxygen and stabilizing the

head, another cuts off clothing over wounds and looks for extremity injuries, and a third monitors vital signs, while the physician does an overall assessment of the patient.

Once the trauma teams go to work, they are all business.

"You don't get a second chance with a real casualty," said Graul, a veteran of Operation Desert Storm and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. "All your training is on the line."

"There is a change in mood in the clinic when multiple trauma cases come in," Martin said. "Everybody feels a little anxious, but we use that anxiety to help us focus."

That focus paid off for the wounded Soldiers July 8. They were successfully treated, stabilized and sent to a medical facility in Balad for further treatment.

After the event, the staff gathered to reflect and review things they did well and highlight areas that needed to be improved.

Ramos said this meeting gave the medical practitioners a chance to talk in detail about how to improve certain procedures and practices. It also gave everyone involved a forum to talk about how they felt about the experience.

"It helped us learn to work with each other," Auck said. "You can always learn from each one of these."

"I think the teams did wonderfully. You never know until mass casualties happen how people are going to react," Graul said. "It's a defining moment."





Doran, a 4-year-old explosive patrol dog, searches the back of a civilian vehicle at a remote location as his handler, Staff Sgt. Gregory Long, directs him to potential hiding spots. They are assigned to the 407th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron at Ali Base.

# Military working dogs

## Man's best friend helps fight against terrorism

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Lek Mateo  
56th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

**ALI BASE, Iraq** — Dogs are known as man's best friend, but to Airmen and Soldiers here, military working dogs are considered a four-legged partner in the war against terrorism.

Security forces Airmen and Soldiers, along with their military working dogs, have partnered together to provide force protection on this sprawling air base that is home to thousands of Coalition service members and civilians.

In the eyes of the Air Force, the dogs are considered valuable property, like an F-16 Fighting Falcon, said Tech. Sgt. Terri Frye, 407th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron's kennel master, who is deployed from Hurlburt Field, Fla. But to her and many of the handlers she works with, their dogs are much more than that. Although the handlers understand that the dogs are Air Force property, they cannot help but become attached to their dogs after years of working with them side by side, she said.

"Your dog is your best friend," Frye said. "And you will always remember the dogs that you have worked with."

Staff Sgt. Gregory Long, a dog handler here deployed from Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, said he has always been around dogs, having grown up on a cattle farm.

Part of the job for Long and his 4-year-old German shepherd explosive patrol dog, Doran, is to search vehicles that come onto base.

Although some searches net contraband, Long said their mere presence also provides a deterrent to bad guys, especially when they see Doran's sharp fangs. He compared Doran's teeth to 42 bullets that can exert 350 to 400 pounds of pressure per square inch in a bite — enough to break a man's arm. Nevertheless, the two share a close bond.

"Doran is my partner," Long said. "He looks out for me, and I look out for him, and he is a partner that

**"He looks out for me,  
and I look out for him,  
and he is a partner  
that I would trust  
my life to."**

Staff Sgt. Gregory Long

I would trust my life to."

Here, Long has also struck up a partnership with his Army counterparts.

Army Staff Sgt. James Demaree said he thinks it is a good idea to have joint patrols with the Air Force not only because they foster a good working relationship, but more importantly, because the job they perform benefits everyone here.

"The Air Force security forces and their dogs provide a service that helps us ensure that we can have a better level of force protection for our Soldiers and Airmen based here," Demaree said.

The natural instincts a dog possesses contribute tremendously to their arsenal for deterring attacks, Demaree said.

"The dog is definitely an important asset," he said. "He has keen senses like his smell and hearing that are well beyond ours, and that definitely make him a combat multiplier."



## Coalition Corner

*... highlighting countries  
serving with MNF-Iraq*



**Denmark**

*local name: Danmark*

The Kingdom of Denmark is located in northern Europe, bordering Germany and the Baltic and North Seas. It consists of a main body called Jutland, and has two major islands, Sjaelland and Fyn. Size-wise, Denmark is slightly less than twice the size of Massachusetts.

The main language in Denmark is Danish, with English being the predominant second language. However, Faroese, Greenlandic and some German are also spoken throughout different regions.

This beautiful country is historically rich and boasts countless castles, palaces, churches and royal buildings dating back to the 17th century. Comprising a peninsula and islands, Denmark has a plethora of gorgeous beaches, lakes and streams. Although it is part of the European Union, Denmark still uses the Danish Krone as currency. If you have a pocket full of Euro to spend, don't worry — merchants accept both Krone and Euro.

Denmark not only has beautiful beaches, it also has several famous people claiming it as home, including 6'1" bombshell actress Brigitte Nielsen, who starred in the 1986 movie "Cobra" with Sylvester Stallone, to whom she was once married. Viggo Mortensen, who played Argon in the world-famous trilogy "The Lord of the Rings," claims his heritage through his father, who was born and raised in Denmark.

In addition to great vacation spots and attractive famous actors, Denmark also has foods and dishes unique to its culture. One of the more popular national dishes is Frikadeller, Danish meatballs usually served with browned butter, potatoes and stewed cabbage.

When asked what he misses most about his country, Henrik Solgaard of the Danish Army said, "I miss the 'Easy On' cycling team, the Danish Tour de France Team. I also miss my best friend Kaare."

Denmark — yet another piece of the Multi-National Forces - Iraq puzzle, dedicated to rebuilding Iraq.

References: [www.ipc.dk](http://www.ipc.dk), [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov), [www.movies.yahoo.com](http://www.movies.yahoo.com), [www.danishexporters.dk](http://www.danishexporters.dk), [www.wanderplanet.com](http://www.wanderplanet.com). Coalition Corner is compiled by Sgt. Misha King, assistant editor, [scimitar@iraq.centom.mil](mailto:scimitar@iraq.centom.mil).





# Baghdad jazz night be-bops with Airmen's notes

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Tudor  
Air Force Print News

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — If you close your eyes, lick the sand off your teeth and listen, you would swear you had been dropped into some Soho nightclub.

Groovy, suave musicians clad in hip suits shuffle in after a meal uptown. Instruments clatter from their cases and get propped on stands. After some quick glad-handing of friends, a few wires are plugged in. Some quick scales peep out of the horns before a deep voice intones a mellow introduction. "Welcome to jazz night." Then, music.

Alto saxophone notes twist smoothly on the same breeze that carries the cool air across the small room. The thread of a muted trumpet is wound between, causing toes to tap, heads to bob and fingers to snap in time, the room alight with jazz phrases that ask you to do nothing more than just be cool.

Now open your eyes. Playing sax on the unpainted plywood floor of the "Alaska" tent wearing his blue shorts, T-shirt and reflective belt is Master Sgt. Rosmon Johnson. Blowing a trumpet beside him is a similarly clad Maj. Joe Baker setting the easy mood for Baghdad Jazz Night.

With the right amount of imagination, the duo's startlingly good jazz chops easily transform this military tent called Paradise Point into a trendy New York City hot spot. It is a Sunday staple at the base now, with Johnson headlining a set of contemporary jazz tunes. Baker joins the set to play a few jazz standards before the duo finish, the set lasting about an hour for between 20 and 25 people.

"We usually go there just to wind down," said Staff Sgt. Isabel Claudio, deployed here from Kadena Air Base, Japan. "They are always so good. They're both pretty good players."

The music is Johnson's way of talking to people and relaxing.

"It comes from the heart," Johnson said. "I'm not a very good communicator, so I talk through my saxophone."

Johnson's set is contemporary jazz. It included flawless versions of George Benson's "Masquerade," Candy Dulfer's "Sax on the Beach," and "Saving All My Love for You" by Whitney Houston.

The first notes came 26 years ago in Baton Rouge, La., when young Rosmon joined the Glen Oaks High School marching band. He also played in the school's concert and jazz bands.

He never aspired to play professionally. Despite his Louisiana jazz roots, a different tune sounded in his mind.

"I'd always wanted to join and have a career in the Air Force," said the 22-year veteran. "I love my country."

He never thought of auditioning for the Air Force band when he joined.

"I wasn't playing like this when I joined the military," he said.

Instead, he chose a career as a heating, ventilation and air conditioning craftsman. He is deployed from Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

Johnson said it was not until almost six years into his service that he felt he could play well. He doesn't read music; he just plays it by ear. He goes a long way to emulate people like his jazz heroes Grover Washington Jr., Gerald Albright and Kirk Whalum.

Baker's path was similar. His first introduction to music was with the euphonium, a sort of tuba. It was not the instrument he wanted to play.

"I wanted to play trombone, but my arms weren't long enough to stretch it out," he said.

He also wanted to play trumpet, but when he saw his brother playing the trumpet, "it looked like he was in pain."

"Eventually, my parents took me to a music store," he said. "The owner asked me to try the euphonium. I blew one note and he said, 'Yup. That's for you.' I think he just wanted to sell us the horn."

The major said Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker were all early jazz influences. However, his interest shifted to singing, with Frank Sinatra and Harry Connick Jr. currently top his list.

"You pick someone you want to follow, but you develop your own style," he said.

In high school, he went on to play baritone horn for an international band, opening his eyes to military music. By that time, he had also decided he wanted to fly airplanes. So he earned an appointment to the U.S. Air Force Academy, played in the academy



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Scott Wagers

**A group of people play a game of dominoes while enjoying the music played during a jazz night event in Baghdad, Iraq.**

jazz band and was soon faced with a tough decision: play music or fly. He said he loved the idea of both. Then one day, he knew what to do.

"I was around some of the Air Force band musicians," the major said. "They said they loved playing music, but they'd give anything to go fly. They told me I could always play music, but I may never get the chance to fly again. It made sense."

Now 13 years into his career and flying E-3 Sentry airborne warning and control systems, he has not looked back.

Deployed here as the wing safety officer, he first listened to

Johnson's set and then asked if he could join in. The two have been playing together at jazz night for three weeks.

Coincidentally, both Airmen also play piano and said technology has made it easier than ever to play a set. Johnson said he used a keyboard to play all the instruments on his backing tracks, played from a mini compact disc player. Baker piped his music off a laptop computer.

Both men said there is something refreshing about playing in front of people.

"There's something you get from a live show," the major said. "I love the performance buzz. Sometimes I get so caught up in it, I forget there's an audience there."

Johnson's feeling be-bopped alongside the major's.

"There are a lot of times when I'm not even aware of my surroundings," he said.

Neither Airman has aspirations of playing a professional gig in a Soho nightclub anytime soon. But if you close your eyes inside Paradise Point on a Sunday night, you'll swear you are there.

"We want people to relax," Johnson said, "and hope they enjoy it."



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Scott Wagers

**Master Sgt. Rosmon Johnson (left) and Maj. Joe Baker play for the crowd on jazz night. Johnson is a heating, ventilation and air conditioning craftsman deployed from Scott Air Force Base, Ill. Baker is the wing safety officer in Baghdad, Iraq.**